

from the Vickers plane, which should have passed within sight, their watchfulness was futile.

The very ship that brought this news, regarded almost as ominous by many of the anxious people, brought also another man eager to stake his life in an endurance dash across the Atlantic. Lieut. C. H. Biddlecombe arrived to navigate Capt. Raynham's Martinsyde. Another who arrived was Major Fisk, manager of the Boulton & Paul company, who came to select an aerodrome for three airplanes his company intends to try a "hop" with in the first week of August. Some new radiators for the Handley-Page machine were also on board. The installation of these may delay the giant bomber several days.

Weather Ideal for Flight.

Although the weather here was ideal for the flight, the fliers headed eastward into the fog which shrouds the Newfoundland banks, a fog which is one of the many dreaded obstacles which will beset the Vickers plane on her day long flight. To Capt. Alcock the fog meant doubled difficulty in keeping the laden plane on an even keel and to Lieut. Brown the shutting off of land from which to reckon and from the sun by which he must steer his course.

The odds, it is generally admitted, except among the youthful optimists who themselves are here to make the great flight, are against the venturing aviators. Nevertheless Capt. Alcock and Lieut. Brown were smilingly confident that they would get across. Confidence indeed is the keynote of the venture, for each of the two fliers, confidence in the heavy plane, the straining motors, in the ability of his teammate to do his share and in himself. Should the navigation of Lieut. Brown fail, the bomber would fly aimlessly in the general direction of East, driven about by winds of unknown strength and direction.

Appeals Sent Through Fog.

As the afternoon proceeded the great wireless at Cape Race and at the other stations along the coast talked with steamships far at sea, warning them to be on the lookout for the Vickers plane. They answered that they were feeling their way along in a dense fog and could see or hear nothing. It is probable that Capt. Alcock will endeavor to fly above the fog so that Lieut. Brown may get his bearings, but should it be too high it may be difficult to surmount it at the start of the journey. As the journey continues the plane will become lighter and will fly faster. At the start, Capt. Alcock estimated, his speed would not be better than seventy or seventy-five miles an hour plus the easterly speed of the wind. Toward the end of the journey the lightened plane will be pushed ahead at ninety-five or a hundred miles an hour. The average Capt. Alcock hopes to make is eighty-five miles an hour.

Although it is possible that the waiting world will hear no word from the speeding plane, radio flashes may come in from ships at sea that the voyagers have been sighted. Every vessel in the North Atlantic equipped with a radio set has been warned by the British Air Ministry from London to be on the lookout for the voyagers.

At least two ships beside the Digby are known to be in the North Atlantic somewhere near the course of the fliers, and it is probable that there is a number more such as the little Danish tramp steamship which picked up Harry Hawker.

The ships known to be in the general line over which the Vickers bomber will fly are the cable ship "MacKay Bennett," some 250 miles from Newfoundland at work repairing ocean cables, and the steamship "Sachsen," about 150 miles from shore. If the wireless outfit of the Vickers-Vimy has failed the task of Lieut. Brown of keeping the plane headed direct for Ireland will be much more difficult, for he depends, as did Commander Grieve, Hawker's navigator, on radio flashes from ships encountered to give him his latitude and longitude at intervals to check up his own figures.

The difficulties of navigation in the air are many times those of the ordinary type. For speed Lieut. Brown can only reckon the revolutions of the engine. This of course varies according to the weight carried by the plane. He has no way of accurately determining how far the wind is bearing him away from his course. The use of the sextant is much more difficult upon a bobbing, unsteady plane than upon the deck of a ship. Lieut. Brown has obviated this difficulty to some extent by the use of the Byrd bubble sextant which guided the American explorers to the Arctic.

If a head wind should be encountered on the journey eastward the plane may exhaust its gasoline supply before reaching Ireland, although it carries enough for 2,200 miles, which gives the voyagers a margin of 200 miles. If he finds his gasoline supply running out Capt. Alcock is able to husband it by shutting off one of the two motors. This would cut down his speed to little more than sixty or seventy miles an hour, but the gasoline consumption would be cut almost in half.

The ability of the Vickers-Vimy

Flying Across the Ocean



Left—Lieut. A. W. Brown, navigator; right, Capt. Jack Alcock, pilot of the Vickers-Vimy biplane.

bomber to travel on one engine gives her big advantage over Harry Hawker's single motored Sopwith, for engine failure with Hawker meant an instant glide into the sea, while for the Vickers plane it merely means reduced speed unless the second engine, under the strain of carrying the entire load, collapses like the first.

The Handley-Page machine, which has four motors, is theoretically the safest of the three planes for the transatlantic flight, although the weight of her four engines and their fuel supply does not permit her to carry more than enough gasoline to complete the flight. Should Alcock's plan succeed there will be no Daily Mail prize of \$50,000 awaiting Admiral Kerr and his fellow voyagers. Their flight, however, Admiral Kerr has said, is as much for the purpose of making observations of conditions over the North Atlantic as for winning the prize, so they will start the hazardous flight nevertheless.

Should the Vickers plane drop into the sea, Captain Alcock and Lieut. Brown have a chance of safety, varying according to the progress they have made in the journey before being forced to descend. Unlike Harry Hawker, who carried a flimsy boat, Capt. Alcock will depend upon the buoyancy of one of his gasoline tanks for safety. Both Alcock and Brown will endeavor to cling to a tank resting on the fuselage of the plane behind the cockpit in which they sit if their plane sinks. The "gas" in this tank will be used first. How long their plane remains afloat depends upon the amount of gasoline remaining in its many tanks. Both men wear life saving vests which will keep them afloat for some time.

To provide space for the huge amount of gasoline carried, 845 gallons, weighing about 5,500 pounds, was a problem which was solved only after much study. The nose of their craft is formed of a gasoline tank and behind the cockpit concealed in the fuselage are six more. The central section of the upper wing also contains gasoline in a wing shaped tank.

The fliers are cramped in their cockpit and will probably endure much suffering during their twenty-four hours of unchanging posture. They are surrounded by instruments and can hardly shift their positions.

The Sporting Side of It.

Should Alcock and Brown win out in the sporting chance they are taking, for it can only be called a sporting chance, England and the United States will unite in rejoicing, for Alcock is a Britisher and Brown is an American, although he was born in Scotland and is nominally a citizen of Great Britain. Brown's father and mother are Americans, and he himself, on reaching 21, selected American rather than British citizenship when he had the option of choosing. He is technically British, however, as he became a citizen of Great Britain when he entered the British army to do his bit at the outbreak of the war.

The plane itself was built in England, as were the Rolls-Royce engines which

ground during this tryout exchanging bits of wit and humor with P. M. Muller, the Vickers manager, and other friends. Their ears were turned to catch the slightest intimation by an off note in the great roar of the engines, but outwardly they seemed without a care in the world. They are both constitutionally men of action and found the waiting during the erection and testing of the Vickers plane in Newfoundland exceedingly irksome.

Later the motors were stopped for a time and the two men ate a light lunch. By this time the camera men were busy, and every bit was photographed much to the amusement of the two. As the time drew near for the start Capt. Alcock shook hands with Mr. Muller and said cheerfully: "See you in London."

He added that the people waiting at St. John's would hear from the plane by radio before they went to bed up there.

Both men, their little bodies looking clumsy in their thick, unwieldy flying clothes, clambered briskly into their cockpit.

Another fifteen minutes the engines roared while the fliers listened and the plane shuddered under the blast of her own propellers, held back by checks under the wheels. Then, sharply, Alcock raised one hand, the mechanics pulled the checks from under the wheels and the plane taxied off.

ALCOCK AND BROWN WAR AIR VETERANS

Both Gifted Naturally and by Experience for Trip.

The Vickers-Vimy transatlantic attempt will be a success if the engines and the structure of the plane prove as reliable during the flight as the men guiding the big bomber have shown themselves in the past. Both men have war records and rendered much valiant service before finally being brought down as prisoners during aerial exploits almost as hazardous as their present attempt to span the ocean.

Capt. John Alcock, leader of the expedition, was one of the comparatively few Britons who could fly before the outbreak of the war. His knowledge of aviation made him exceedingly valuable as an instructor, when Britain, unprepared, set out in 1914 to build up an air service to repel the raids of Zeppelins and big German biplanes. Capt. Alcock, who was born in Manchester in 1892, took out his first flying license in 1913. His principal pre-war exploit was the winning of second place in a Great sporting event, the flight from London to Manchester and return, which awoke many Englishmen to the realization that flying was a fact and not a theory.

Lieut. Arthur Whitten Brown, who fulfills the triple duty of navigator, wireless man and relief pilot on the Vickers craft, is almost the physical opposite of his companion, although both are quick thinking and quick acting. Traits picked up, at least strengthened, by their experience in the war. Lieut. Brown, who is thirty-two, is quiet, slimly built and sharp of features. His companion is dark and his eyes gray. He resembles his chief in that he, too, is of a cheerful disposition. Indeed, all the fliers who intend to dare the Atlantic may be described as constitutionally optimistic, for the spanning of the ocean by airplane is at present distinctly a job for an optimist.

Lieut. Brown's interest in aviation, it is said, was first from an engineering standpoint, when he was connected with the British Westinghouse company, which is now associated with Vickers, Ltd. This is the great British manufacturing concern, the aviation department of which built the big bomber in which they fly, and in which the machine in the London Daily Mail contest. When the war began Lieut. Brown joined the university and public school training corps. After some training he became attached to a Manchester regiment and went into France with this outfit in 1915. Later he was transferred to the Royal Flying Corps, where he served as an observer.

In November, 1915, Lieut. Brown set out in a squadron on a long distance reconnaissance far behind the German

lines. The carburetor of the plane went wrong in the air and the plane was compelled to glide to the ground. Brown was too busy destroying important military papers to brace himself when the plane landed on rough ground, and the crash landing jammed him so tightly into a corner of the cockpit that he had to be cut out. His thigh and one leg were broken and he was badly cut.

After treatment in German hospitals he was transferred to a German prison camp and eventually was sent to Switzerland. In 1917 he reached England. For the remainder of the war he was occupied in technical work for the Air Ministry.

Lieut. Brown, despite his comparatively youth, has a reputation as an engineer in England. He is a member of several engineering organizations and is a keen follower of the latest improvements in both gasoline motors and airplanes.

In addition to his accomplishments in this line he is said to be thoroughly familiar with radio operation, and a good navigator. It was because of his knowledge of navigation that he appreciated the merit of the Byrd bubble sextant, invented by Lieut. Commander R. E. Byrd, U. S. N., and used in the navy transatlantic flight. Lieut. Brown got one of these instruments from the American navy, which is eager to assist the British fliers. He expects it will be of great aid in making accurate observations in the pitching, tossing airplane.

NAVY PLANS FLIGHT ACROSS THE PACIFIC

Cut by Congress May Force Scheme's Abandonment.

Special Dispatch to THE SUN.

WASHINGTON, June 14.—Secretary of the Navy Daniels announced to-day that plans for a flight across the Pacific were under consideration. Details have not yet been taken up, but the general idea is to follow up the pioneer work so successfully begun by the NC-4 under Lieutenant-Commander Read.

Mr. Daniels pointed out, however, that the plan could not be carried out if the Naval Affairs Committee insisted on maintaining its stand that the naval aviation appropriation should be cut to \$15,000,000.

"Such a measure appropriation will mean that we cannot fly across the Pacific this year or next year," said Mr. Daniels. "It will mean that we will

stand still instead of progressing. Coming after our greatest achievements in crossing the Atlantic Ocean through the air, the action of the committee in cutting off aviation with barely enough to permit it to stand still, let alone progress, is particularly distressing and discouraging to the aviation men who have

plans for even bigger things in their minds."

Great Britain, Mr. Daniels pointed out, was making an appropriation of \$300,000,000 for her joint army and navy air service. France and Italy also were taking steps to develop air machines on a large scale.

FRENCH MINERS WILL STRIKE.

PARIS, June 14.—The general strike of the members of the Miners Federation will take place Monday, it was announced to-day by M. Bartuel, general secretary of the federation.

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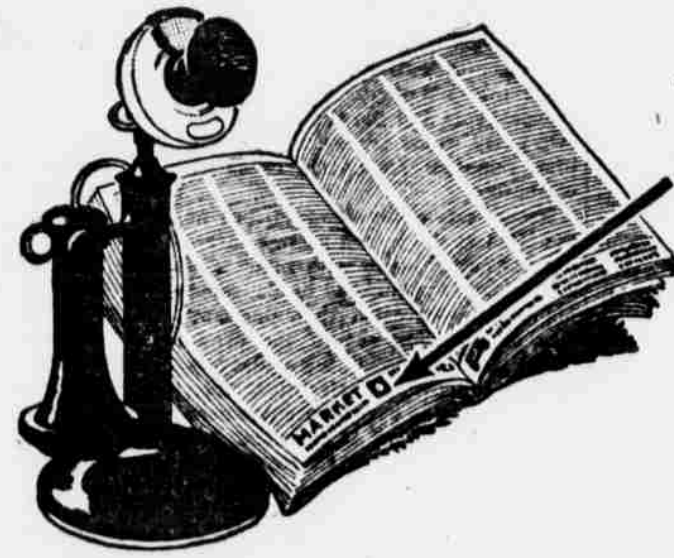
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